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THE PONTIFICATE OF PIUS X.

BY THE MOST REV. JOHN IRELAND, ARCHBISHOP OF ST. PAUL.

THE brief review which I propose to give of the three and a half years of the pontificate of Pius X is intended in the main as a reply to an article in the January 4th REVIEW, signed "A Catholic Priest." In its treatment of its theme, it will follow largely upon the lines chosen by the writer of that article.

The writer should not have veiled his personality under the anonym, "A Catholic Priest." Anonymity is not always censurable; but it is decidedly censurable when it involves in its contentions others than the writer. Here a whole class is brought upon the scene, the whole priesthood of the Catholic Church. Naturally, the reader remarks to himself: If the author of this article is a member in good standing of the Catholic priesthood, if opinions such as his are authorized, or even tolerated, within its ranks, a novel and ominous situation is created for the Church, which at once is made to face an era of disintegration, disciplinary and even doctrinal. "A Catholic Priest" should have signed his name to his article; the reader, then, would have known what value to put on his words, what conclusions to draw from his paragraphs, one more startling than the other, all going to prove that the Papacy is properly characterized by Carlyle, as personified "finesse, chicanery, hypocrisy, false or foul dealing"; that the best of men, a very saint, ascending the throne of Peter, "New Testament in hand," becomes ensnared in its meshes and is plied beyond recovery into its worldliness of spirit and perversity of method of action.

I must note the manner of argument to which "A Catholic Priest" is so ready to resort—generalizations to bewilder *a priori* the fancy of the unreflecting reader, cumulative charges of crime and infamy, unsupported by facts, to prejudice his judgment.

Here it is: "The abominable traditions that have disgraced the Roman See"; "the bigotry, cruelty, hatred of truth and defiance of civilization which characterize the Papacy at this hour"; "the gigantic fabric of centuries of Papal traditions with their secular aims, their aristocratic pride, their immovable stubbornness and their theocratic pretensions." This manner of argument denotes excitement and passion: instead of leading to conviction, it should put us on our guard. It is not the calm voice of logic or history; it is bluster and swagger to conjure with before the crowd. It is unworthy of the writer in whom we are invited to see a serious searcher of truth; it is unworthy of the theme which "A Catholic Priest" has in hand—the Papacy. Let critics belabor the Papacy as they will: when all has been said, the Papacy is still the loftiest embodiment of moral grandeur and beneficent well-doing pictured upon the pages of the story of humanity; even in criticism, it should be treated with respect and reverence.

"Pius X entered upon his pontificate with the New Testament in his hand. . . . Of the New Testament spirit there is none, under the present régime, at Rome."

The charge, as formulated by "A Catholic Priest," is not altogether and exclusively his own. It comes from pens of others—notably from Fogazzaro in the well-known volume "*Il Santo*," with this difference, however, that, far different from "A Catholic Priest," Fogazzaro is dignified and respectful, equally so when he blames the Papacy as when he praises it.

Pius X entered upon his Pontificate "with the New Testament in his hand." He chose for his motto the words of St. Paul, "*Restaurare omnia in Christo*"—to renew all things in Christ. And Pius X has not departed from the spirit of his motto; he has not allowed the New Testament to drop from hand or mind.

The New Testament is Christ speaking and doing, nineteen hundred years ago, in Palestine; the Christian, chieftain or subject, must hold it as his rule of life, and breathe into his acts the lessons and the spirit of its teachings. But it needs to be properly understood; its lessons need to be properly applied.

The words of Christ in the New Testament are vital principles of religion and ethics—ever unchangeable as truths, yet ever changeable in form of practical application, as are changeable the circumstances of human life. The acts of Christ, ever

perfect and all-holy, as the acts of a Divine Person, were, in fact, limited to such form as was called for by the demands and the characteristics of the people among whom He walked, by the situations into which He was cast amid men and things in the Palestine of His day. And then the institutions, reported in the New Testament as ordered by Christ, were germinal, destined to grow and expand in time. As time went by, the acorn pushed upward its branches and leaves; the institutions of Christ took upon themselves new vestures and new modes of action, to suit their new stature. Were the visible Christ in the world to-day, ruling in person the Church, and a Testament were to be written of Him, it should not, in principle and in spirit, be a different Testament from that which was penned in the early days of the Christian religion: but this second Testament would not be identical with the first in the facts it should witness, in the discourses and conversations it should record. Christ would have lived with His Church in the twentieth century, and His acts and words would have been such as the needs and the opportunities of the century suggest or require.

In the New Testament, the Church of Christ was the mustard-seed, the smallest of grains. It has grown up; it is greater than all herbs; it has become a tree so that the birds of the air come and dwell in its branches. To insist that the ruler of the Church of to-day move and speak according to the letter of the New Testament, and not otherwise, is to demand that the great tree, severing itself from roots spread through every land of earth, lopping off branches amid which all tribes and peoples seek shelter, should become the atomic mustard-seed of its Palestinian years.

"Thoughtful Catholics," writes "A Catholic Priest," "have long been weary of Pontiffs that were great diplomats, great builders, great theologians. A great Christian is what they have been sighing for; a Christian, that is, in its one sole proper meaning—a man, namely, who is like Christ." This is mere juggling with words: if a meaning is intended, it is that the Papacy go back to the fields and lake shores of Galilee, that the world of modern times resolve itself into the conditions of olden Judea.

Diplomats, builders, theologians—that is, precisely, what the Church requires, what correct-thinking Catholics delight to see installed upon the throne of the Fisherman.

The Church, by virtue of its constitution and its mission, is a

mighty commonwealth, set down by God upon earth, spiritual in its inmost soul and in the purpose of its being, temporal in its habitat and in much of the means it must make use of to do its work among men. Of course, the Church is a spiritual Kingdom; but it is, also, a temporal Kingdom. The spiritual is not held up in mid-air; it must be housed upon earth. It works, not among angels, but among men; with the affairs of men it must perforce concern itself and it must deal with them by methods within the reach of men, by methods that are human in their nature, whatever otherwise be their intent and ultimate result.

And so the Pope, the Head of the Church and the Supreme representative of its spiritual life and aims, must be a diplomat. He must speak to men individually and collectively; he must address those who are governed and those who govern. With those in power he must argue and negotiate in order to safeguard the interests of religion, to secure for it liberty of speech and of action; and the matter upon which he argues and negotiates will often be the temporal, inasmuch as the spiritual is often bound up with the temporal. Let us take, as an instance, the present condition of things in France. The French Government is glib in proclaiming liberty of conscience for all Frenchmen alike, whether Catholics or non-Catholics. But, at the same time, it enacts laws which do not allow Catholics to enjoy liberty of conscience, unless it be in their interior soul. They are refused the control of their temples requisite as a condition of the outward and public exercise of their religious duties. Is the Pope to sit still in the Vatican — merely to lament and pray, or, as "*Il Santo*" wishes him to do, to go out and spend himself in comforting the sick in some neighboring hospital? No, he must step boldly forward and tell the Government of France that its "Cultural Associations" violate the primary principles of Catholic faith: he must instruct bishops and priests as to their duty in the hour of conflict; he must exhort the faithful to steadfastness, and menace with the penalties of the Church the weaker ones, disposed to perilous compromise. This is diplomacy, and a neglect of it should be a stigma on the Pontificate of Pius X.

Times have changed since the days of the New Testament. There was then no Clémenceau, no Briand: there was then no law of "Cultural Associations." There is no act of Christ giving immediate and explicit warrant to what Pius X is doing. But

should Christ have done otherwise than Pius X is doing, had similar circumstances confronted him? Methinks, Christ laid well the foundation of future Papal diplomacy when He chased the money-changers from the Temple, when He proclaimed the great principle that was to regulate in all coming ages the relations between Church and State—"Give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; but give to God the things that are God's."

What is meant by a "builder" in the Roman Pontificate, I may not exactly divine. I take the word to indicate one who organizes the work of the Church in the world, who plans for the widening of its sphere of influence, for its progressive march amid the nations. Surely, in this sense, the Pope must be a "builder." The order of the Master was: "Teach all nations." What else, then, will the Pope do, but open the highways to His messengers, strengthen them in the positions they have been able to occupy, direct, counsel and command, according to succeeding needs, as directs, counsels and commands the general of an army, or the sovereign of a vast empire? What else will he do but build up around him, within his central citadel of action, a group of auxiliaries, and secure to himself and to them such facilities and guarantees of freedom as he may deem conducive to the weal of his ministry? And, throughout, the Pope will be dealing largely with things temporal and adapting himself to rulings and methods of conduct that are human, that are worldly, in the sense that they are necessarily the rulings and methods of the world in which he lives and labors. We are not, indeed, obliged to believe that each and every act of the Pope, in building up and directing the affairs of the Church, is always the wisest and best. No privilege of infallibility was promised to the administrative, as there was to the teaching, Papacy. The individual Catholic is not forbidden to have his own opinion, and to give of it discreet expression. But to question the motives of the Papacy, where reasons for so doing are not evident, to taunt it cavalierly as contrary to "honesty and truthfulness," without clear demonstration of the charge, is unfair and unrighteous. Language of this kind is not that of the loyal soldier of an army, which, in order to win against multitudinous enemies, must be serried in its ranks and united in its object-view; nor is it, even, the language of ordinary good sense, which dictates that, until the contrary is conclusively proven, the judgment of the chieftain is to be trusted and fol-

lowed, because the chieftain has a deeper consciousness of his responsibilities and is allowed a wider breadth of observation, and is, consequently, more likely to be better informed, and to be more earnest in the performance of duty, than the individual may presume to be. The Catholic Church is by no means a school of slavish subjection, nor of total surrender of thought or action. But the Church, no less, is a school of obedience to authority and of respect for its mandates, and therein has ever lain its strength and its power of ultimate triumph.

"Teach ye all nations, teaching them all things whatsoever I have commanded you." . . . "Preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be condemned." The primary mission of the Church is to teach: as its chief guide and spokesman, the Pope is primarily a teacher. Whatever else he does, he fails supremely if he has not reechoed through the world the words of Christ—"all things whatsoever I have commanded unto you"—if he has not guarded pure and intact the deposit of faith entrusted to his keeping. Dogma is not the whole religion of the Catholic Church: belief in dogma is not the whole or all-sufficing duty of its members. There must be also the rectitude of conduct, the holiness of soul, if members of the Church are to find favor with the Master. But belief in dogma is a necessary element in this rectitude of conduct, inasmuch as of itself it is prescribed by Christ, and is the recognition of divine authority over the human mind. And belief in dogma has this further importance, that dogma encases the rules making for rectitude of conduct, and gives to them their reasons of being, and the motives that impel to their observance. One of the most marked evils of the day is the neglect, even the contempt, of dogma. Conduct, we are told, is the one thing necessary: why trouble oneself with matters of mere belief? Why does the Church annoy us with its creeds? The answer is given in the words of the Gospel: "Teaching them all things whatsoever I have commanded." . . . "He that believeth not shall be condemned." And, then, what will conduct be without principles and motives? As well may we ask what will the ship be on the broad seas without chart and compass? It ill becomes a writer, willing to sign himself "A Catholic Priest," it ill becomes any one willing to call himself a Christian, to throw slurs upon dogma, as if dogma had the effect of "de-

stroying the spiritual insight of the heart"; since, on the contrary, dogma it is that quickens that insight and imparts to it supernatural aim and power of action.

The infallibility which the Church attaches to its teachings is limited to formal, authoritative, so-called *ex cathedra*, declarations of matters of faith and morals. Deductions from dogma by theologians, applications of it to practical life, relations established between it and science or history, are not dogmas, are not stamped with the Church's seal of infallibility.

An outcry not seldom raised against the dogmas of Catholic belief is that they are not the plain and simple reading of the New Testament, that the New Testament should be all-sufficient, that Catholics should return to the New Testament, throwing off the burthen heaped upon their shoulders age after age by Councils and Popes. But what has been happening since the New Testament was written? Its germinal truths have been growing, unfolding their divine meaning branch by branch, leaf by leaf, assimilating to themselves cognate truths from every garden of human knowledge, interpreting themselves ceaselessly in accordance with the never-ceasing growth of humanity, with the ever-changing circumstances of its life. The truths of the three earlier Gospels grew with the advent of the fourth; the truths of all the Gospels grew under the pen of Paul: the truths of the whole New Testament grew in every century of the life of the Church. Christian truth has life and motion; it progresses. It is not a dead letter, a mere archæological mummy locked up within the pages of the New Testament. It has grown; and over its growth the Church, under divine guidance, has kept vigilant watch, to hold it ever true to its first germ, ever true to the mind of Him who placed that germ in the soil of the world's life and thought. We must needs be wary with our words when we talk of going back to the New Testament, when we reproach the Church with apparent accumulations of dogmas, as if those were contrary to the teachings of Christ, instead of being the selfsame teachings in their legitimate maturing form. Bring back the teachings of the Church to the New Testament! Will you bring back adult manhood to the cradle of its infancy?

The chief part in the Church's watchfulness over divine truth falls to the Papacy. Is not this to mean that we must have theologians on the throne of Peter?

But not to the official and formal definition of dogma is the teaching office of the Papacy to be limited. The Pope is the guardian of dogma. His duty is to watch over the approaches: to ward off peril. His duty is to hold dogma intact in the minds of believers, to warn them against assertions and doctrinal opinions that may weaken their faith, either because of inherent falseness, or of imprudence in form, or of untimeliness in utterance. He is the shepherd of the flock, the father of the family: he must advise, exhort, command, as the need may be: he must guard the sacred "deposit." To do this the more effectively, he gathers in his auxiliaries: hence the Roman "Congregations," or Committees of Cardinals and theologians. The Roman "Congregations" are a bugbear to "A Catholic Priest." Against the "Congregations" under the Pontificate of Pius X are levelled his severest blows. "Our best scholars," he writes, "have been condemned, their writings have been put on the Index; a violent effort is making by the official theologians of Rome to close the door in the face of scholarship." Let us see what foundation there is for this onslaught upon the "Congregations."

It is not held that Papal infallibility sheds its rays over the deliberations of the Roman "Congregations." Infallibility is personal; even in the Pope himself it is brought into act only on solemn occasions and in a solemn manner. The "Congregations" represent the administrative authority, not the infallibility of the Papacy.

No doubt whatever, the attitude of the Congregations of the Holy Office and of the Index—to which specifically appertain questions of faith and morals—is that of anxious care lest error come near, that of severe restriction when its presence is detected. The "rigidity of Rome" has been talked of, and she is not herself unwilling to pronounce the word. There is so much at stake—the purity of doctrine. There is such wild menace against faith in the recklessness of modern research, in the audaciousness of modern thought. Were Rome to lower the barriers and allow the flood of uncertain and unproven opinion, so rife to-day, so proud and daring, to sweep unchecked into her schools and into her courts, evils there were, far more deplorable than those of an occasional discouragement to a thinker or an explorer, than those of an occasional mistake in her decisions, from which, later, she may have to recede. What if there was a Galileo case? It was

one out of a thousand: and when it did occur, something was needed to prevent scandal in Christendom from a mode of exegesis to which scholarship had not yet prepared the public mind. Decisions of the Congregations need bring no alarm to the scholar. They put him on his guard, lest, with the gold of truth he mingle the dross of error—as is so often the case in books censored by the Index. They do not forbid further investigation, when the decision bears on science or history. It is the rash, the unproven thesis, not that which is nearing a demonstration, that the Congregations fear and reject.

The record of the Roman Congregations for centuries lies open before the public eye: zeal for religion, intelligence of the needs of the Church, prudence of deliberation characterize its pages. But only to decisions of theirs under the Pontificate of Pius X am I called to make special reference.

There was, first, the condemnation of the books of Abbé Loisy. This condemnation caused an uproar, which has not yet been stilled, among “modern scholars” who are willing, as they say, “to take account of historical and Biblical criticism.” But where was there blame for Pius X and the Congregations? Read “*Autour d'un Petit Livre*,” and tell me what is left therein of the doctrine of the Incarnation and the Redemption, what is left therein of the divine origin of the Church and the Sacraments? Either Loisy was to be condemned, or Pius X was to fold his tent and hie himself and his illusion of a divinely established Church into the nebulous regions of fable.

Next, there was the ban put by the Index on the books of Viollet, Laberthonnière and Fogazzaro. There may be in those volumes, and undoubtedly there is, much that is true and healthful. The notice was to the writers to revise their pages, to trim here, to add there, if their books are to merit unimpaired circulation among the Catholic laity, and free ingress into Catholic schools and colleges. It is not necessary to have been in the counsels of the Congregation to discover in those books, as they read to-day, mistakes and shortcomings. Viollet, a most estimable juriconsult and a sincere Catholic, is decidedly too strict a constructionist in the limitations he puts upon the teaching authority of the Sovereign Pontiff. Laberthonnière, a philosopher of no mean merit, makes out, it may be admitted, a good case for his apologetics of “immanence”; but he spoils all by, seemingly at least, constru-

ing it as the sole practical system of apologetics befitting the age, to the neglect and exclusion of the more objective argumentation of the older schools of the defenders of the faith. Fogazzaro is a dismal failure as a theologian. His "*Il Santo*" minimizes the importance of dogma and misapprehends totally the public mission of the Church and the Papacy.

Finally, there was the decision of the Scriptural Commission on the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. The decision refuses, indeed, to expel altogether the authorship of Moses from the first five books of the Bible. But, we may ask, does prudent, calm and duly conservative exegesis—so far as exegetic scholarship has gone—deny him therein certainly and absolutely a place as author? The decision lays down rules, by which glaring objections to a complete Mosaic authorship are obviated. Is not this an evidence that the Commission moves with eye intent on the results of modern Scriptural investigation? And, again, by its indirect appeal to well-established facts and theories, it opens the way to further careful study, to the clear conclusion of which it impliedly promises its adhesion. Is there not here an encouragement to scholarship to continue its labors?

What he means by "Truth," we may well ask of "A Catholic Priest," when he defiantly warns Rome that, "despite the despairing rage of the Curia," she "cannot" annihilate Truth. "Like wildfire, the 'new' views," he tells us, "are spreading among Catholics." All depends on what the "new views" are. Are they well-substantiated discoveries in realms of archæology or philology? Such discoveries are spreading among Catholics, and Rome willingly bids them to spread, confident always that no harm can come from true science or from true history to the Christian revelation, even though outposts of its defences may, now and then, suffer alteration. But are the "new views" mere guessings, mere will-of-the-wisps, such as fill the air in these days of mental restlessness? Catholics stand on guard and refuse to recede a single step from olden positions—waiting patiently until the "views" are dissipated into invisible air, or pass from guessings into proven conclusions.

This is the policy of Catholics, the policy of Rome, in presence of "Modern Scholarship," real or fancied; and I will not say that it is not the policy of wisdom on the part of the great Church whose God-given office it is to guard, as the very apple of the

eye, the all-precious treasure of the revelation once delivered to the Saints.

It is easy to make out a case with a one-sided presentment of facts and circumstances. It is thus that summary judgment is entered by "A Catholic Priest" against Pius X for treatment awarded to Monsignor Bonomelli and to Father Tyrrell. But are there reasons for this judgment? Monsignor Bonomelli, the sweet-tempered and zealous bishop of Cremona, issued a pastoral letter, opposing union of Church and State, and for that he was rebuked by Pius X. Was the rebuke unmerited? I do think that Monsignor Bonomelli would himself now agree with me that his letter was, to say the least, untimely, appearing, as it did, while the French Government was preparing the law of separation, which the Pope has since declared to be, not a law of separation, but a law of oppression. Father Tyrrell has had no quarrel with Pius X. His quarrel is with the Society of Jesus. The rules of the Society he, no doubt, understood well when he entered into its membership; and he should now abide resignedly by the consequences of those rules. As to the letter written in his regard by Cardinal Ferrata, requiring that before he be allowed to say mass he promise to "submit his epistolary correspondence to ecclesiastical authority," I think that all should have been well, if, instead of breaking out into an angry screech, he had questioned further the Cardinal as to what exactly was comprised under the term "epistolary correspondence." Father Tyrrell's so-called "epistolary correspondence," in one instance, at least, has been made the vehicle of dissemination for very perilous theological opinions. Correspondence of that kind the Cardinal would have subjected to ecclesiastical supervision; letters on private personal matters most likely would have gone scot-free.

The "*Lega Democratica Nazionale*" of Italy met with a rebuff from Pius X. Is this such a horrid mistake of his Pontificate? While professing to be a Catholic Association, the "*Lega Democratica*" mingled to no small degree political democracy with religious democracy, thereby compromising the Church before the Italian Government. And, furthermore, while professing to be Catholic, and "wishing above all to promote the highest interests of the faith," it showed little readiness to follow the directions of the hierarchy, the official and divinely appointed keepers of "the interests of the faith." The Catholic Church

is a hierarchical institution: whatever is put forth as professedly Catholic must come under its supervision. Pope and Bishops are the responsible parties: the battle, if waged in the name of the Church, must be under their supreme direction. Is Pius X to overlook the vital framework of the Church?

"*Modernita*" is a wide-winged term; it shelters many living things, some clean, others unclean. By itself the term is no clearing-house certificate for all freightage which it may have labelled. This, and nothing more, was intended by Pius X in his Encyclical "*Pieni d'animo*," addressed largely to the younger Italian clergy. New recruits must neither lead the army, nor be trusted by themselves at a distance from its lines. In their ambition to do new things, as befitting a new age, priests are, at times, exposed to the temptation to do things mischievous—" *novità malsana* ": they must be cautious. "Progressive civilization"—a term to be spoken with care, lest tares sprout up under its shadow and the good grain be smothered by the rankness of their growth. To what is truly "progressive civilization" the Catholic Church opposes no objection; she gathers into her bosom "the old and the new"—"*nova et vetera*": but she will ever look beneath the name before she makes "the new" her own, before she serves it up as wholesome food to her children.

But "the temporal power"—"the scandalous clamor for provinces and principalities"—"the barbaric pomp of secular kingship"! Why does "A Catholic Priest" study by cunning words to turn the reader's attention from the real point at issue? "Barbaric pomp of secular kingship," in the thought of Pius X and in that of his Secretary of State, Cardinal Merry del Val, plays no part in their protest against the situation to which the Papacy is reduced to-day. The question at issue is the spiritual independence of the Holy See. It is believed, and rightly so, that a *status quo* whereby the Head of the Universal Church is the civil subject of any one potentate gives no stable guarantee of an unfettered spiritual sovereignty. Many are the supposable contingencies in which the subject of one civil power is barred from the confidence of other civil powers. History had solved the problem by granting to the Papacy temporal kingship. The settlement of history was broken up by Italy. The problem is reopened. The Catholic world has not renounced the ideal; the Papacy has not renounced it; the Papacy will not renounce it.

The present position of the Holy See is abnormal: it cannot be taken as permanent. We can leave the solution to Providence; but, meanwhile, the principle must be upheld. This is what is done by Pius X in refusing to be a subject of the Kingdom of Italy. Indeed, it is by so refusing that he maintains *de facto* the dignity and the unfettered spiritual independence of the Holy See. It is not true that the Catholics of the world are opposed in this regard to the policy of the Vatican. They patiently await a solution—nothing more. Few among American Catholics, I imagine, would have been pleased to read in the newspaper despatches, the morning after his accession to the Pontificate, that Pius X, as a liege subject, had repaired to the Quirinal to present his homage to his King and Sovereign. Nor is it true that Italy itself regards the question of the independence of the Holy See as a closed incident. It sees the problem: it may not know how best to solve it: but it is aware that the problem remains. Meanwhile, Pius X has done much, very much, to rid the problem of its practical asperities in Italy.

The "Loubet incident" was deemed by the Vatican a measure of expediency in the public maintenance of principle. The supreme ruler is the supreme judge of what should be done. No one has the right to misjudge his motives, or attribute to him such motives as are utterly impossible to one whose motto, in deed, as in word, is—"*Instaurare omnia in Christo.*"

The Pontificate of Pius X has fallen upon evil days. The unrest of the age is terrific—social, political, moral, religious. Seldom, if ever before, in history was the sea so tempestuous over which the successor of "the Fisherman" is called to steer his Ship of State. That all will be well, despite billows and breakers, we are sure. Christ is with the Church. That, for the time being, the position of His Vicar is most trying, we cannot doubt. The duty of the hour, incumbent upon Catholics, is to gather around him in serried ranks, comfort him by their sympathy, if they cannot aid by word or act—at least never weaken his work, or sorrow his heart, by misjudging his motives, or misrepresenting his purposes and labors.

JOHN IRELAND.